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The Musical Drama and the Works of

Richard Wagner.

From the French of EDOUARD SCHURE.

(Continued from page 99).

III.

The Master-Singers played but an inferior rôle in the poetry of the middle ages; but in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries a very important part of the history of German culture belongs with them. After those brilliant poet knights of an earlier time, who were known as the *Minnesingers*, and along with the simple, popular ballads which burst out so spontaneously in the sixteenth century, the citizen poets of the free cities may be considered the true representatives of scholastic pedantry. Their uncouth ritual, their barbaric code known as the *Tablature*, their solemn sessions, make an amusing picture of the stationary school, exclusive, rigid, unfriendly to any free inspiration, which makes a trade of poetry, and a mere apprenticeship of genius. The most flourishing of these schools appeared in Nuremberg, in the sixteenth century, in the time of Albrecht Dürer. Wagner, seeking the great human verity in the varied national types, discovered here the material for a most interesting drama. He conceived the idea of placing in contrast with these scholastic pedants one of nature's poets, full of youth and fire, singing as the birds sing, because an inner voice commands it, knowing no prosody but the beatings of his generous heart, no rules but his own impetuous and overmastering inspiration. We have then poetry, enthusiasm, genius, entering the lists against feebleness and prose. This strife is the point of the drama, where the noble, the beautiful and the true, by their own simple expansive power, triumph over the mean, the false, and the ridiculous. This beautiful idea is brought before us through a variety of characters, an abundance of episodes, a wealth of poetic invention and a lavish use of melody and instrumental effect, which makes the drama a truly wonderful production.

When the curtain rises, the interior of a church, that of St. Catherine, in Nuremberg, is discovered. The grand nave vanishes obliquely at the left, so that one sees only the last rows of worshippers. The organ peals, and the congregation sing the last strophe of a choral in four parts, whose sonorous harmony swells grandly under the arched roof. As in all Lutheran canticles, the grave and measured melody rests an instant after each verse, before resuming its upward flight. In these short pauses, a significant pantomime is carried on between two persons. A young knight, richly clad in velvet, stands behind a pillar with his eyes fixed upon a young girl, seated in the last rank. He seems to desire to speak to her. His expressive gestures indicate a fervent prayer, an appeal, ardent, yet limited by respect. She replies with timid glances,—then suddenly looks down, blushes, and resumes her singing. The conclusion of the service interrupts this mute

dialogue, which has been powerfully rendered by the expressive music of the violoncellos. The congregation begins to disperse; the young girl, accompanied by her nurse, is making her way towards the door, when the knight presses through the crowd and addresses her. He, let us say at once, is Walter von Stolzing, a young Franconian noble, who has just arrived at Nuremberg. Hos-pitably received in the house of a goldsmith, Pogner, one of the most wealthy of the Master-Singers, he has fallen passionately in love with the daughter of his host, and has followed her to church, hoping to obtain a moment's speech with her. Eva, trembling, agitated, already conquered, knows not what to say, yet seeks a pretext to linger; there is no young girl so *naïve*, but love can make her marvellously ingenious. Eva knows well enough how it has happened that her hand-kerchief was left behind on the bench, and that her bracelet was dropped on the way out. "Go and seek them, they are there," she says to her waiting-woman, and the latter hastens away. Instantly a rapid dialogue begins. Walter presses her with questions. "Only one word,—you will not say it? The sentence of my fate, yes or no?—Only a faint whisper,—say, Fräulein, are you betrothed already?" What does he learn? Her father has promised her to the master-singer who tomorrow shall win the crown. "And the maiden, whom would she choose?—You or no one!" Eva cries, forgetting herself. Madeleine, the good nurse, in vain interposes with an air of importance and of maternal protection; the word is spoken, it rings in the ears of Walter, it burns in his heart. The lovers make a *rendezvous* for the evening: Walter believes he can gain the prize; and the scene ends with a song, "*Ich liebe dich.*" The melody, pleading, questioning, impatient, which seems to hesitate and try its wings in the brief and hurried questions of the lover, bursts into accents of chivalrous daring, and assumes the bold contour of a brilliant *aria*, in which the first scene comes gaily to its close.

Eva goes away, led by Madeleine, and Walter remains alone with David, an apprentice of Hans Sachs, the poet-shoemaker, to whom Madeleine confides the duty of instructing Walter in all that it may be needful for him to do, to obtain his degree of master. "Master, all at once! Oh! oh! here's courage!" cries the apprentice, scanning Walter from head to foot. He knows the difficulties of the art and enumerates them with amusing pride.

Other apprentices now arrive in the church, where a solemn session of the Master-Singers is to be held. It is a historic fact that these grand meetings of the brotherhood were held in the church of St. Catherine in Nuremberg. All the time teasing their comrade David, who plays the wise man towards the stranger knight, they bring up the benches for the masters, the elevated chair for the singer, and arrange a stage veiled by a black curtain, which they call the *Gemerk*. In this cage of evil augury is shut up

the *Merker*, the critic, who marks down pitilessly the faults of the hapless singer. The apprentices rally the knight upon his audacity in thinking to go at a single bound over all obstacles, and to improvise himself "master" in a day. Their task ended, these *gamins* perform a wild dance around the tribune, hurling at the knight this mocking refrain, to which they keep time as they dance:

"The crown of flowers, the lovely crown,
Shall this fine knight attain the prize?"

There is a mad mischief in the song; the last note is like the snap of a squib; but the entrance of the grave Master-Singers cuts the merriment short. The school being in high conclave, Pogner hastens to introduce his protégé, Walter von Stolzing. At his appearance, a murmur runs through the learned assembly. A knight in the school of these simple burghers! It is a dangerous innovation, subversive of all order. And then to ask at once for the rank of master,—what youthful arrogance, what aristocratic presumption! An unknown author, coming from the depths of his province, his pen behind his ear, to present himself to the French Academy, could cause no greater surprise in Paris, than the young Lord of Stolzing entering bravely the school of Master-Singers of Nuremberg. It requires all the eloquence of his friend the goldsmith, and all the authority of the old and valiant poet Hans Sachs, who laughs at forms and can already divine in the unknown youth something noble,—to gain for him admission to the solemn test. The President, solemn and severe, the image of rigid dogmatism, rises and proceeds to question the newcomer. Who is your master, he says, where have you learned the art of song? At the question, the most lovely souvenirs of his early youth arise in the mind of Walter; like a dream, comes the memory of the chateau, where, the last of his race, he passed his early days in sweet reveries and long meditations. All this is suggested vaguely by the music, in a prelude of infinite sweetness. Such is the charm of this melody, where the dreamy notes of the horn mingle with the gentle sighs of the violins, that one forgets the scene upon the stage and is transported in imagination to some vast forest solitude where the spring sunshine falls, a checkered light and shade, and only a faint breeze among the tree-tops breaks the profound silence. Walter stands an instant as if lost in these recollections, then he collects himself and his thought seems to shape itself into the slow, broad melody of a *lied*, expressing what he thus recalls, and summing it up.—"There I learnt what it is to sing!"

There is so much self-reliance in his manner, so much brave pride in what he says, that they all consent to listen to him; but first the critic must be installed in his *Gemerk*. By chance, this personage is the most arrant pedant of all, and also, still graver misfortune, an aspirant to the hand of Eva. He has been burning with anger and impatience against the stranger, in whom he already detects a rival. Master Beck-

messier, the city-recorder, a bachelor of fifty years' standing, considers himself the handsomest youth and the most irresistible singer in Nuremberg. His greatest talent consists in criticizing others; to fill this office is his especial delight. He is so skillful that no fault escapes him; he leaps with joy at every forbidden rhyme, and each false note occasions him a thrill of rapture. In his eyes every new singer is a bungler, as to some judges every accused person is at once a criminal. He advances towards Walter with an air of smartness, bows ironically and says in a bantering tone: "I grant you seven mistakes; I am going to mark them down with chalk. But if you go beyond seven you are ruined, Sir Knight!" Thereupon he mounts his staging and disappears behind the black curtain. Walter, already somewhat disconcerted, seats himself in the fatal chair, which is raised facing the Masters like a sort of pulpit. "The singer is in his place," Kothner says in his heavy bass; and from behind the curtain, the critic adds in falsetto the fatal word "Commence." The poet, thus adjured, hesitates an instant, then with sudden inspiration rises to his full height, and seizing upon the word which has been thrown at him as a defiance, takes it as the theme of an enthusiastic Hymn to the Spring-time. "Commence" he says, "Commence crieth the spring-time, in the heart of the woods,"—and a charming and brilliant improvisation follows. While he sings impatient growlings are heard from behind the black curtain of the *Gemerk*, and fierce scratching of chalk upon the tablets. Walter observes this. He pauses and turns indignantly. The harp responds in a rapid *arpeggio*, like a flash of lightning, which then falls back upon an accord of superb disdain. Walter, too full of enthusiasm to be disconcerted, seizes the incident as it flies. Half turning towards the powerless critic, he continues: "Shuddering with rage, with spite and hatred, in a savage thicket the Winter is hidden; hidden under the dead wood the coward rails, hoping to impose silence upon the cry of hope! "But commence!" he goes on, and resumes the prelude to his Hymn.

This dithyrambic melody is a magnificent outburst! intoxicated with light and perfume and life, it soars upward from zone to zone of the blue heaven, sustained by an accompaniment of the full orchestra, where the thousand voices of the forest unite in one grand and beautiful symphony.

The *Merker* loses patience utterly. Furious, he emerges from his hiding place, brandishing the black tablets, all scribbled over with chalk. "That is enough," he cries, "there is no more room." Walter would finish, but it is useless; the assembly rises tumultuously; the Masters form a ring around the critic, who eagerly demonstrates to them his rival's high crimes and misdemeanors. "No pause, no ornamentation, not a trace of melody!" cries the triumphant Recorder. The opinion is unanimous; Walter's attempt is declared absurd, foolish, incomprehensible. One man only watches the brave singer with an admiration that is half amazement. This is old Hans Sachs, the beloved poet of Nuremberg;—in his way, a true poet, and above the prejudices of the school. He takes up the defence, and calls upon Walter to go on with his song, regardless of these pedants who refuse to listen. Walter obeys, proudly erect in his pul-

pit, and goes on amid uproar and outcries from below. The *finale* of the first act is very effectiv. The daring song of Walter dominates over the Masters, as enthusiasm must forever overpower incapacity and weakness. He sings of the bird with radiant plumage, who essays his flight amid a crowd of screech-owls, rises far above them, spreads wide his wings in the tranquil azure, then through the free spaces of air flies to his native mountains. The bird is himself, his own song, the proud melody which now in this third *strophe* spreads to the utmost its broad, strong wings. "Adieu forever, ye Masters!" cries Walter, scornfully; he descends from his place, and goes out of the church. The uproar of the scandalized Masters is at its height. But through all this agitation Sachs, standing motionless and fascinated, has heard only the song of the stranger Knight. "What courage!" he cries, "What fire!—silence, Masters, listen! It is the heart of a hero, it is a true poet!" It is but wasted breath; the verdict is rendered, all hurry pell-mell towards the doors, and amid the general confusion the apprentices renew their mad gambols around the tribune, and their refrain, "The crown of flowers, the lovely crown!"—

The second act shows us the picturesque city of Nuremberg. A narrow street opens before us in perspective. At the left, is the modest little house of the shoemaker Hans Sachs; clumps of lilacs surround the peaceful dwelling and a flowering vine wreaths itself familiarly about the latticed windows of the old poet. At the right, is the more imposing mansion of Master Pogner, shaded by a fine linden tree, decorated with a stone staircase, and a recessed door-way. Two ranks of pointed roofs, with airy gables and little graceful spires, like a forest of masts, lose themselves in the distance, and over the busy city the last splendors of a summer sunset are fading in the pure sky.

The curfew has sounded; the apprentices are leaving their work with merry outcries: "To-morrow is the St. John! it is the St. John, when one sees all flowers and ribbons everywhere!" David and Madeleine, who venture themselves an instant among the mad crowd, receive all sorts of railing. "On the St. John, every body goes to be married! the old men marry the little girls, and the old maid marries the boy!" Night falls, all disperse, and the street is vacant. Hans Sachs opens the little door of his workshop, lights his lamp, and sits down upon his bench and begins to work.

But the evening is too enchanting, the silence too profound, the perfume of the lilacs too bewildering; the work does not get on, and laying aside his hammer he dreams. The song of Walter rings yet in his ears, and possesses him strangely. "I feel it, but understand it not; I cannot recall it, nor yet can I forget it. I try to seize it, but the measure escapes me. How could I grasp the Infinite? These accents are so well-known and yet so new, new as a bird's song in the month of May." He seeks and dreams, and seeks again and cannot find, while the hautboy and the horn repeat the most tuneful and penetrating phrase of Walter's trial-song. "How did he grasp this melody? from what land does he come? from what world overflowing with youth and strength?" This Hymn to the Spring-time has wakened very deep echoes in the heart of the old poet; it seems to have revealed a crea-

tive force, and waked him up to sing also, as the first notes of the nightingale awake in the trees around a thousand passionate responses. The instrumentation is magical which accompanies this monologue; the light *susurru*s of violins, the faint, dying notes of the flute, the prolonged, unanswered appeal of the horns, those mysterious harmonies through which flat the exquisite *motifs* of Walter's song, reveal to us that labor of brain and heart, that mysterious germination, that new spring-time, which is putting forth in the head of the old master.

An unexpected and charming visit disturbs his reverie. Eva has slipped out from the paternal abode; she crosses on tip-toe, and, furtively, like a young fawn, she approaches the workshop of the shoemaker. She is filled with deep anxiety. Has Walter been successful,—will he be permitted to compete on the morrow? This is what she comes to ask. Sachs, agreeably surprised by his fair visitor, rises; Eva seats herself upon the stone bench outside the house; the master, within, rests his arms upon the windowsill, and leans towards the beautiful young girl. The lilacs make a frame for the picture, and a beam of moonlight caresses it. It is an idyl.

A sportive conversation ensues; the old man rallies her on the betrothal which shall take place on the morrow; she cautiously makes inquiries about the events of the day, and learns at last, to her dismay, that her lover has failed completely and been rejected. Sachs, in his *badinage*, slurs the stranger, to bring out Eva's true sentiments, and entirely succeeds in the *ruse*, she praises Walter enthusiastically, and goes away at last quite in a pet, that her old friend will not respond. In the mean time a little secret is also betrayed to us. The gray-haired old poet, yet young at heart, has a little *penchant* of his own for the lovely child, the pearl of Nuremberg. As a baby, she had been his plaything; he has watched her growth, he has taught her many a lesson, he has loved her, caressed her, petted her like an adopted daughter. It is one of those paternal affections which is not quite free from a warmer emotion; but the brave old master does not think of owning it, even to himself, and now that he knows which way the wind blows, he gaily decides to take in hand the cause of Walter.

The adventure suddenly threatens to grow graver. Walter is seen coming down the street; faithful to the *rendezvous*, Eva hastens to meet him. Impatient of further delays, exasperated against the Masters, the young man plans an elopement; he will carry off his lady-love and marry her in his own château. Eva throws herself into his arms without hesitation; they are about to fly together, but they have reckoned without Master Sachs. The old shoemaker has been watching them; he carefully opens his window shutter, and a beam of light falls full upon the lovers, who retreat in alarm. At this moment, Beckmesser appears in the distance, playing on his guitar. The Recorder flatters himself that he shall gain the heart of Eva by a nocturnal serenade. Perceiving his enemy, the critic, Walter draws his sword and would rush upon him, but Eva, who fears to attract public attention, with great difficulty holds him back. At last she coaxes him off under the linden tree, and, hidden from sight, the two lovers await the issue of the scene.

Perceiving Beckmesser, Sachs, in pursuance of

a sudden idea, re-opens his door, and sets his bench out into the street. At the moment when the Recorder begins to sing, Sachs begins to hammer away loudly upon a pair of shoes he is making, and intones with stentorian voice, a characteristic humorous song. Then the Recorder, beside himself with anger, shouts his own prosaic serenade at the top of his voice, and the comic effect is complete.

This amusing uproar brings all the neighbors to their windows, who, furious at being awakened, load the singer with reproaches. David, the apprentice, comes out, and imagining that the Recorder is an enemy in some way to Madeleine, falls upon him, club in hand, and breaks the guitar into splinters. They begin to fight. The neighbors run out to separate them. "What have you to do with it?" cry new comers, and the neighbors themselves become involved in the quarrel. After the neighbors, come the apprentices, and their companions follow; everybody is screaming, swearing, and striking. Corporation jealousies are aroused. Carpenters, tailors, locksmiths, fall one upon another; the Masters themselves, who arrive to restore peace, end by coming to blows; finally, it is a perfect mêlée. Walter, remaining with Eva under the linden, proposes now to cut their way out, sword in hand; but Master Sachs makes a descent upon the lovers, with one hand holds Walter, with the other, pushes Eva into her father's arms, then drags the knight off into his own house and shuts the door. At this moment, the watchman of the night is heard, and the horn of Oberon himself would not produce a more magical effect. The combat ceases as if by enchantment; apprentices, companions, burghers take flight, all the windows are closed in a great hurry, and nothing remains before our eyes but the quaint street, lying deserted in the quiet moonlight. The nocturnal guardian arrives a little too late; he rubs his eyes, looks around him in amazement, believes it was a troop of spectres, and, trembling with fear repeats his chant:—"Listen, good people, lend your ear,—the bell has sounded eleven,—beware of ghosts and goblins,—let no evil spirit bewitch you. Praise the Lord!"

The conclusion of this act is a master-stroke of dramatic and musical talent. The vast *crescendo*, which accompanies the mêlée, develops itself into a fugue, with the melody of the serenade for a *ritournelle*. Mastering the entire orchestra, it becomes a whirlwind of sound. That absurd little air with which the gallant Recorder proposed to soften his obdurate lady-love, serves only to stir up the neighborhood. Like a mocking imp it springs up around him, multiplied to hundreds, and flying out of windows, escaping at doors, returns, a formidable legion, to assail the terrified singer. The pedant is punished by his own sin, labored by the serenade he has himself composed, which infests him like a disturbed ant-hill. The idea is original and the comic effect is perfect. Any other composer would have let the curtain fall upon this Shakspearian burst of laughter. Wagner has not done so, and the subtle, profound genius of this true poet and great musician is rarely more admirably shown. There is the sound of a horn, and all vanishes; the night watchman sings in the silence his grave couplets, half comic, half religious,—the moon climbs between the slender gables of the sleeping city;—with the stroke of a wand one seems

to have been carried off into some airy kingdom, where spirits amuse themselves in sowing discord among the honest burghers, the better to bring about the triumphs of their favorites. *Staccato scherzando* the flutes resume the strange *motif* which is about to be lost in the depths of the bass, while the horn repeats twice, like a soft questioning whisper, three dreamy notes from Walter's prelude. You seem to see the sportive ring of imps and fays stealing away,—its luminous trace fading out fainter and fainter, while one belated sylph leans over Eva to whisper her lover's name in the sleeping ear of the maiden. Music has surely its magic spells; sixteen measures suffice to bring before our eyes all the fairy realm of Oberon and Titania. (Conclusion next time.)

From the Orchestra.

Christine Nilsson.

X.

A representative French composer in the local sense—that is to say with little qualification to carry his fame beyond the frontier—M. Ambroise Thomas, had undertaken a difficulty which his admirers underestimated, but anent which his opponents were scornful. He had hitherto rested his title to reputation as an opera-writer on a couple of lyrical paraphrases (cynics said parodies) of foreign works—on "Mignon," an adaptation from Goethe, and on "Le Songe d'une Nuit d'Été," a wide departure from Shakespeare's play. So wild a perversion of him whom some French critics even to this day persist in styling *le grand Williams* is rarely seen on the Parisian stage, as this "Dream of a Night of Summer," with its Falstaff, Essex, Queen Elizabeth, and Williams Shakespeare himself as *dramatis personae* mixed in inextricable confusion. Besides these two masterworks, Ambroise Thomas had produced at the Grand Opera "Le Comte de Carmagnola" (1841) and the "Guerrillero" (1842), and was noted also for his "Cald." His first work, "Le Perroquier de la Régence," brought out thirty years ago, is forgotten even in France. Neither in his earlier nor in his subsequent compositions had the colder among French musicologists succeeded in discovering any special aptitude for the lyric drama. The order of his music they defined in one word: his style was "moonshiny." "A lesser Gluck," his admirers predicated of him. "Infinitely so," retorted his antagonists.

The libretto which served as groundwork for M. Thomas had been prepared by MM. Michel Carré and Auguste Barbier. The librettists had taken the privileged liberties which might excite an Englishman's amusement, a German's ire; for Germany holds the great poet in severer regard than ourselves. A Hamlet who sings the celebrated Soliloquy on Death in jerky lines—"Etre ou n'être pas—mystère—mourir, dormir, rêver peut-être," with curious effects in the accompaniment of wood and strings, is not perhaps so outrageous a burlesque as a Hamlet who sings a "Bacchic Song" (fancy Hamlet "Bacchic!"), a Polonius who is the accomplice of Claudius in the murder, a Laertes modelled on the languishing tenor type, or a final tableau wherein Hamlet, having killed his uncle at the grave of Ophelia, is proclaimed King of Denmark in his stead. A ballet, too, in "Hamlet," a ballet which contains a polka, is not the worst freedom which has been taken with this tragedy in its day. A hundred and fifty years ago the opera of "Ambleto" was produced in London, with an overture composed of "four movements and a jig." On this idea, M. Ambroise Thomas's notion is certainly some advance.

"The present "Hamlet" opens with the coronation of Claudius, celebrated with a sort of nuptial chorus to the words—

Le deuil fait place aux chants joyeux.
Jour de fête, jour d'allégresse!
Nous saluons avec ivresse,
G roi, ton hymen glorieux.

To which the King replies, and then Hamlet enters in a melancholy mood. For his *entrée* the phrase "O woman, thy name is frailty," is musically turned on the words,

O femme, tu t'appelles,
Inconstance et fragilité!

accompanied by the violoncellos. Hamlet's part is a *mélodie*—a character preserved throughout the opera.

For the first scene between the Prince and Ophelia, the tone is given from the passage "Doubt that

the sun is fire," literally enough followed here:—

Ah doute de la lumière,
Doute du soleil et du jour,
Doute des cieux et de la terre,
Mais ne doute jamais de mon amour.

Laertes makes his appearance at the end of this duet. He is a languishing sort of body—a dilution of the stage troubadour—a Scandinavian Dunois. And the chorus of revellers who tilt the conventional goblets with nothing in them, and sing a namby-pamby refrain about "allégresse," what a parody are they upon the fierce Norsemen and their reckless chief who

Keeps wassel, and the swaggering up-spring reels,
And as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down,
The kettledrum and trumpet thus bray out
The triumph of his pledge.

But then the task of Messrs. Barbier and Carré was not fidelity. They had to operate the tragedy, to cut, pare, alter, hack every situation to the exigencies of lyric conventionality. And how they and the composer together managed to turn the notable old points in the tragedy to musical purpose, would have horrified our stern "legitimate" actors. Hamlet's father, for instance, appears with a rumbling and growling of trombones which doubtless caused M. Sax lively satisfaction, but which was a spasmodic agony to the audience. The Ghost is monotonous to a Tartarean degree: his recitative is limited to two notes. Only the picturesquely setting of the scene and the excellent acting of M. Faure saved this part of the opera.

The second act proceeds as in the play, the one bright sun-ray amid its profound gloom being the presence of Ophelia. Ophelia, as Nilsson plays the part, is the prop and mainstay of the opera. Beyond the momentary irradiation of her coming and going, all is dulness and atrophy. But even in this bright instance, Ambroise Thomas has to a large extent missed his opportunity: he might have done so much more with such a character and such an artist. This second act contains a duet between Ophelia and the Queen, but a duet which leaves nothing in the memory. She leaves the scene, and the flicker of brightness dies away; the duet between Gertrude and Claudius is dull; dull also the chorus of strolling players, which surely offered opportunity for picturesquesque color, but the composer is unequal to the demand. Then comes Hamlet's "Bacchic" song—"O vin dissipé la tristesse"—a statement, however, to which poor Hamlet practically gives the lie. It does not dissipate his *tristesse*, or M. Thomas's. The scene of Gonzago's play was magnificently mounted and acted at the Grand Opera, but here again the music failed: it was sheer noise. The librettists had turned the situation at the end of this scene to appropriate operatic account; had made Hamlet denounce Claudius to his face as the murderer of his brother, and call on the assembled court to "venger la mort du roi par la mort du coupable." With his own hands he endeavors to tear the crown from the culprit's dastard head. Here, at all events, is an opening for powerful musical treatment; but how has the composer dealt with the situation? He gives the exalted Prince a weak *mélodie* with which even Faure could do nothing—an *andante* devoid of accent, which breaks suddenly off when the musician might have expanded it into a broad and lofty concerted number—and an *allegro* whose emptiness and inanity not all the big artillery of the orchestra could hide. Compare this miserable poverty of treatment with the finale of the third act of "La Favorita," where a similar dramatic situation—a king denounced and dumbfounded—fell into the hands of Donizetti.

The third act (MM. Barbier and Carré were not particular about transposing the action) opens with the celebrated soliloquy. As well attempt to set a treatise of Spinoza or a thesis of Hegel to music as this. Music ceases at the point where metaphysics begin; yet here is music called upon to express the mental state of one who, in the words of Pascal, "doubts everything, and, doubting even that he doubts, rolls incessantly in a restless circle." Wherewith shall music hope to illustrate this frame of mind? with hollow sonorities; with dubious harmonies; with foggy modulations? It is not Ambroise Thomas's worst fault that he utterly fails to realize such subtleties of thought; for what genius could succeed and yet remain comprehensible? Thomas treads on steadier ground in the succeeding trio between Hamlet, Ophelia, and the Queen, wherein an expressive phrase occurs—"Allez dans un cloître, Ophélie!"—and wherein the answering plaint of the young girl is tender and touching. But once more, Ophelia being discarded, out goes the light. The interview between mother and son—the "Look on this picture and on that" scene—is cold and scanty; a tedious recitative cut into fragments occupies the place of a concentrated and inspired motif. Phrases

of frigid correctness, learnedly written, accurately modulated, and—wholly destitute of dramatic vigor.

In the fourth act the fog lifts, for this act is devoted to Ophelia; the spell of her sweetness and pathos is upon it, and the audience forget what defects may lie in the music, for they hear her voice and see her. The scene opens with a ballet: peasants are enjoying themselves, holding a mystic fête, when the demented lady enters. On the first night in Paris, the fortunes of the opera took a lively and unexpected turn at this point. A gloom had gradually settled upon the spectators, as the dull work dragged along, and effectless situations followed on each other's heels. But the fourth act opened; the ballet cheered them somewhat, and Ophelia followed. The step, the look, of Christine Nilsson, the first words she uttered in the tender and piteously-sweet voice, enchain every sympathy. It is true that even in this act, as the critic of the *Opinion Nationale* says, "on danse plus qu'on ne vocalise, on vocalise plus qu'on ne chante;" but Ophelia pervades it, and the audience were more rapt with the manner than the matter. Upon the scene of the revels she enters, fantastically decked with flowers and wisps of straw; slender and sweet; fair, even to transparency; with eyes luminously bright; the weirdness of a fay, the beauty of a virgin. Reason has abandoned mortality only to leave the soul more visible. She sings—lifting an ethereal voice to the lark. Wild roulades, in which the depth and pathos of love mingle with its gayer memories; laughter, in which tears have a part; a joy infinitely compassionate, a pain infinitely dear. She tears the flowers from her hair, and, distributing them, sings a strange wandering melody of Sweden, penetrating in its beauty, luring and tempting, but treacherous in its loveliness, as the voice of a sea-nymph. The shepherds retreat, marvelling; and then she scatters the last of her garlands, and draws near the fatal stream. With the refrain of her lover's song upon her lips, "Doute de la lumière," but feeble as a far-off echo, she casts herself upon the bosom of the water, and floats softly away with the distant chorus of the peasants as an unconscious requiem. You know the picture of the "Young Martyr of the time of Diocletian," the fair Christian girl, drowned, but seeming in a peaceful slumber, with corded hands and a hazy aureole above her head. This picture of Delaroche's was reproduced in the opera; and the beauty of it and its unspeakable truth and tenderness smote every heart and hushed every voice, until the act drop fell and the audience woke to realize that not Ophelia dead but Nilsson living had wrought the miracle.

When Ophelia passes from the opera, dulness once more asserts its sway. The last act takes place in the graveyard. The song of the Grave-diggers lacks character; the romance of Hamlet, "Comme une pâle fleur," evaporates in confused sighs; the chorus of girls lamenting Ophelia is sheer banalité. Desperate with lost love, Hamlet is about to fall upon his sword, when his father's spectre enters and reminds him of his vengeful duty; whereupon the hopeless hero turns the weapon against his uncle—slays him—and is proclaimed king in his stead.

So ends "Hamlet," an *avare manqué*, a failure but for Ophelia. From absolute ruin Nilsson saved the opera; her genius even gave it a fictitious vitality. Paris went over and over again for the sake of the fourth act, and in the beauty of the one impersonation lost sight of the dull and ineffective surroundings. "It is a success, despite all," wrote M. Paul de Saint-Victor, a noted critic; "the Siren attracts the crowd to these stagnant waters. The debut of Mlle. Nilsson has had the prestige of an apparition; she appeared at the opera as through the portal of Dreams."

"A woman," wrote M. Hipp. Prevost, "whose talent like her person is all distinction, all purity, all poetry, has performed a miracle. Without gesture, without movement, by the fascination of look, the charms of voice, the touching grace of carriage, Mlle. Nilsson has realized the Ophelia of Shakespeare unto an ideal unsuspected perchance by the genius of the poet himself."

"The physique, the voice, the acting of Mlle. Nilsson," wrote Mr. Alexis Azevedo in the *Opinion Nationale*, "the nature too of her special talent, concur in producing an effect whose proportions it is impossible to appreciate without seeing the part played by a different Ophelia."

Good artists have often marched to greatness ere now in the van of a great work. But it is only given to the rarest genius to vivify dulness, and to convert a *fiasco* into a reputable success.

XI.

When Mlle. Nilsson paid her second visit to England last year, the renown of her Ophelia contributed to the prestige of her re-appearance. She was not destined to repeat the entire performance here; but

she gave the celebrated scene of the fourth act at Mr. Benedict's annual concert, and gained as lavish encomiums (personally bestowed, apart from the music) as those awarded by the Parisians. In Italian opera she maintained her own high fame, the knowledge of which was now the wider spread. But it was specially in oratorio that she acquired a new distinction: a triumph gained at the Handel Festival. At that commemoration, which it may be remembered was held at the Crystal Palace on June 16th, 18th, and 20th, Mlle. Nilsson found herself in good company. The principal singers included Mr. Sims Reeves, Mr. Santley, Mmes. Lemmens-Sherington, and Sainton-Dolby, Mlle. Tietjens and Miss Kellogg; band and chorus numbered four thousand executants under the well-tried baton of Costa. The second day of this celebration was made memorable by the appearance of the Swedish singer, who fairly and easily carried the first honors of the day. The Selection—devoted as a matter of course to Handel exclusively—had opened with the "Epinicion or Song of Triumph," which includes the matchless "Dead March," the magnificent execution of which by the orchestra provoked a spontaneous burst of cheering from the multitude. They would fain have had it repeated, but Mr. Costa was stern, and the appearance of Mlle. Nilsson on the platform allayed the tumult. Her first contribution was the song of the Israelitish woman in "Judas Maccabaeus"—"From mighty kings he took the spoil." The plaudits of the crowd turned from redeeming the March to welcome the Swedish favorite, and then were hushed into expectation as she commenced the song in praise of the Maccabee. Anticipation was soon distanced by surprise at the purity, the flexibility, the extent of the young singer's voice, and the fervor of her dramatic expression. Her English pronunciation is crisp and clear, every word uttered with a distinctness rarely attained even by native artists; and as those who had heard her before in opera had only heard her through the medium of a foreign language: the well-pronounced English, vigorously yet elegantly sung, was a new gratification. The animation with which she gave the passage, "He put on his breast-plate as a giant, and girt his warlike harness about him," the force and finish of her vocalization, and the refinement of her phrasing tools captive her hearers' hearts. Her pure voice travelled easily and naturally across the large area; there was no straining, yet not a note was lost; her intonation was faultless. If she had been warmly welcomed on beginning the song, it was nothing to the repeated acclamations which pursued her on leaving the platform, and which were repeated when she subsequently stepped forward to sing "Wise men flattering" from the same oratorio. This air is equally exacting upon the singer as the song of triumph, but in a different degree. It demands a greater display of tenderness, more sweetness, an evener balance of phrasing. But whatever its exactness, they were fulfilled by the Swedish artist in complete measure, and her perfectly articulated shake won rapturous applause.

Christine Nilsson's part in the commemorative performance was short; for the singers were many and the diversity large; these exigencies and not the will of the audience, limited her share. But enough was heard at the festival to certify the conviction that as an oratorio singer she is unapproached by any other artist whom recent years have produced, and excelled in her sphere by none. The earnestness and refinement of style, which with the sweet and facile voice makes her a lyric of the first grade, are equally felicitous in opera and oratorio. The conjunction proclaims the rare singer. Jenny Lind had it in enviable measure. The second Jenny Lind completes the parallel. The development of Christine Nilsson as the first oratorio singer of the day is a certainty which time will afford. When the opportunity arrives, the great choral societies will find the material—material of a finished and perfect form—ready to hand.

XII.

At the highest point yet attained of her fame Nilsson is with us again, the object of a popularity which each successive appearance and each submitted task have served to increase. Yet it would be wrong to say she has reached the zenith of her reputation. She will achieve yet higher ranges. Her capacities are progressive; her means capable of expansion; she is still on the upward path. The succession of her labors proves this. Year by year she improves; though excelled only by herself, she nevertheless is excelled. The decay which follows full ripeness is far off, for the ripeness is not yet achieved. She is painstaking, conscientious, and young; add these qualities to her rare endowments, and who shall gauge the future excellence of the mature artist?

Fortune has nowise impaired her native modesty or rendered her otherwise than humble and gentle

and diffident. Her periodical visits to the home in Sweden are paid without the slightest ostentation. At home, she takes part in the singing at the village church. "I am always glad to assist the poor" she remarked simply on one occasion when she gave her services for charity; "for I have known poverty by experience." Her success in the lyric world she is wont to ascribe to Wartel's excellence as a teacher more than to any inherent merit of her own. After one of her earlier triumphs she wrote to this master a letter which he has carefully preserved. "Cher Maître," she wrote, "je ne veux pas dormir sans vous remercier du bon conseil que vous m'avez donné l'autre jour. Je l'ai suivi, et mon succès de ce soir a été complet. En attendant le plaisir de vous serrer la main et de vous remercier de vive voix, crovez moi toujours votre petite élève affectionnée et dévouée, Christine Nilsson.—Vendredi minuit."

The dwelling which Mlle. Nilsson occupied a short time ago in Paris was simply though elegantly furnished. Her suite of apartments "gave" (as Charles Dickens would say) upon the Tuilleries; the salon was fitted with white and gold, the furniture blue damask. On a white marble chimney piece stood a bronze and gilt ornament of the Louis Quinze period. Flowers formed the principal decoration of the room, and of these Christine has ample provision when she is playing. She has only the trouble of conveying them from the theatre.

Her vocal inspiration—tell it not in Gath!—is porter. Let us hope that in England she adopts the loflier substitute, stout. Let us also, hope that the Parisian porter is worthier than the acclimated name often implies. Judging from its effects it should be above suspicion.

In all respects the private character of Christine Nilsson is a happy complement of the greatness of her public worth. Estimable by virtue of her accomplishments and of the high position her genius has secured, she is no less to be admired for the modesty and gentleness with which she bears her honors. She "bears her faculties so meek," that to have the advantage of knowing her in private is to merge admiration of the gifted artist into esteem for the unassuming woman. (?)—Lond. Orchestra.

Carl Loewe.

When, some months ago, the mournful news reached us that Carl Löwe, the celebrated German ballad writer, had bowed his wearied head in everlasting sleep, far from his home or, at least, far from the place which must be named his home in more respects than one, there was no lack of demonstrations of all kinds, expressing most unfeignedly deep regard and grateful remembrance. It might, indeed, be said—and the assertion would be corroborated by the circumstances of the case—that the great majority of the public paid almost unconsciously their tribute of sorrow at the loss of the man and of the composer, when Löwe, even then nearly a wreck in mind and body, left Stettin, when his artistic career might have been justly regarded as completed, since it left the world of art no room for, nay, not even a chance of continued hope, but made up for this by the rich stores it bequeathed us. While the heavy and severe loss which the world of music suffered by Franz Schubert's premature death was well expressed in the monumental inscription: "Music buried here a rich possession, but even still fairer hopes," we can, on the other hand, say with a certain amount of satisfaction with reference to Löwe, who could look back upon a long life of activity, that he had realized to a great extent the fair hopes; that music had not sorrowfully buried there, as in the case of Schubert, but may feel satisfied with the possession, the rich and imperishable possession, which the grave cannot cover, either in the one case or the other, but which still exists and will continue to exist among us, scattering its refreshing influence as though from an inexhaustible source.

Johann Carl Gottfried Löwe was born on the 30th November, 1796, at Löbejün, not far from Halle. He received from his father, the Cantor of the place, his first lessons in science and music. At a very early age indeed the nascent talent of the boy was developed, so that, according to his own assurance, he played the organ and the piano, and sang at sight without the acquisition of the first elements having cost him the slightest exertion. His greatest delight was to wander about the country; there, in field, in forest, and on the wild heath, his imaginative powers gained strength, a love for the beauties of nature characterizing him up to a very advanced age. The fact, too, of being thus frequently out in the open air, under the free expanse of heaven, was well calculated to increase, more and more, the feeling dormant in his breast for what is imaginatively romantic, for he often came across hunters, fishermen, and shepherds, from whom he was fond of hearing all kinds

of fairy tales about water-spirits, goblins, and forest spectres, which, with his predominating tendency towards the Romantic, a tendency that explains his great partiality for the composition of ballads, soon obtained complete mastery over his fancy. When he was ten years of age, he went to the school at Köthen, where he soon made many friends by his talent, and his clear, fresh boyish voice. Subsequently he became a pupil at the Gymnasium of the Orphan Home, Halle, where, to develop his musical talent, he was recommended to the then celebrated teacher, Türk, who, after the boy had correctly executed some very difficult tasks, took him in hand, and gave him lessons in theory and singing. Löwe derived especial benefit from this course of instruction, as Türk, at the same time that he taught him theoretically, employed him also, practically, allowing him to take part in what he did himself. For instance, he gave him something to do at his own performances of classical masterpieces, in which the boy sang soprano. Meanwhile the report of Löwe's talent had spread abroad, and therefore we must not be astonished that his then sovereign, Jérôme Napoléon, King of Westphalia, granted him yearly allowance, so that he might devote himself exclusively to music, under Türk's direction. Löwe left, in consequence, the Gymnasium, and began a strict course of theoretical study, but only to discontinue it very soon, as in 1813, the King lost his throne, and Löwe's master, Türk, was snatched from him by death. Löwe returned to the Gymnasium, and applied himself so perseveringly that, by 1817 he was able to go up to the University of Halle, to study theology. During the three years of his university course, during which he successfully prosecuted his theological studies, he endeavored to perfect himself in pianoforte playing; gave music lessons; attended as tenor the Singacademie, then conducted by Maas and Naue, and belonged also to a private circle where, as was then customary, the most popular operas were performed with pianoforte accompaniment. In his private soldier's coat—Löwe was then serving his year as a volunteer—it was in this circle that he sang, with great applause, his first ballads, among which were "Erlkönig," "Wollhaide," and "Treuöschen." It was here, too, that he made the acquaintance of his future wife, the talented, and at that period highly popular, Julie von Jacob. In the year 1819 20, he went to Dresden, his visit being attended with rather important consequences, because it laid the foundation for the lasting friendship which sprang up between him and Carl M. von Weber, then at the pinnacle of his fame. Of no less importance for him was a journey he made at the end of the year 1820, to Weimar and Jena, for he then became acquainted with Goethe and the celebrated pianoforte player Hummel. Löwe was more especially well received by the poet-prince Goethe, to whom he had dedicated a collection of songs.

Soon after this there happened in the composer's life the decisive circumstance which caused him to close his theological career, and dedicate himself exclusively to music to the end of his days. We behold Löwe accepting the post offered him as Cantor and Organist of St. Jacob's, and teacher at the Gymnasium, Stettin, the place destined to become his home, and the ground on which his musical and creative talents was developed. Now began his musical exertions, properly so speaking, and that period of his artistic productivity so important in the history of art. The very first year after his arrival, he was appointed Musical Director at St. Jacob's, at the Gymnasium, and the Seminary for Schoolmasters, with a considerable augmentation of salary. In promoting the musical and intellectual life of the town, and the practical cultivation of singing more particularly, Löwe, in his extended sphere of activity, was able to render the most valuable services, particularly after the establishment of a local Singacademie. In addition to the establishment of this society, to Löwe belongs the merit of having been the first to get up at Stettin grand orchestral concerts, of which two generally took place in the course of winter, and the programmes of which consisted partly of orchestral works, above all the symphonies of Beethoven, Mozart, etc., which were then performed before the public for the first time; partly of instrumental solos, that is to say, pianoforte concertos played by himself; and partly of important vocal pieces. He was supported at these concerts by Herr Liebert, violinist, and then Musical Director, as well as by his wife, who was very popular as a *bravura* singer. Fragments, also, of his more important compositions, such as the opera, *Malak und Adhel*, were introduced at these concerts, while, at especial church concerts, he produced his oratorios, especially *Die Heilands letzte Stunde*, *Huss*, *Die sieben Schäfer*, and *Die ehrne Schlange*. Alter the death of Liebert, who prepared so well the way for Löwe, by rehearsing beforehand the more important symphonies with his admirably

trained orchestra, and in consequence of the unfavorable circumstances, partly of a political nature, which distinguished the year 1848, these concerts soon declined, and were first revived by Herr C. Kossmaly, under whose intelligent management they now form an essential component part of musical life at Stettin. If, after these short allusions to what Löwe did in his time, we cast a glance on him as a man, and on the nature of his disposition, we find he was particularly celebrated for personal amiability, with which he gained the hearts of all those who had any kind of dealings with him and enjoyed an opportunity of meeting him in the narrower circle of social life. Devoted frankness, noble self-denial, no less than a childlike mind, untainted by aught that was common, may be mentioned as the predominant features of his character. Equally open and natural, he displayed in his conversation a profound knowledge of his art, a lively fancy, and a poetical mind, which found vent in striking comparisons, pictures, and forms of representation, exciting admiration by their richness and purport. His conversation, which gave evidence of peculiar professional acquirements, was distinguished by a certain humor that flashed from him almost unconsciously. Complacent, arrogant mediocrity, and triviality in art, found in him a severe and unsparing judge; those who were animated by serious and proper motives, he encouraged by appreciative acknowledgment; while he welcomed distinguished artists in the most amiable manner, and with frank, warm recognition.

The publication of several of his works rendered his name very well known in a short time, and it almost seemed as if no shadow was destined to dim the young composer's fresh and indefatigable activity. But even Löwe's life, though rich in sunny brilliancy, was not without much deep shade, at times arresting the vigorous flight of his fancy, though among the enviable qualities belonging to him was an almost unassailible and immovable calm of mind, which, as some one has admirably remarked, enabled him to pass smilingly by so many miseries in life. Though his domestic happiness received a fearful shock by the death of his first wife in 1823, it was destined quickly to recover by the side of his second, Auguste Lange, so celebrated as a painter and a singer, of Königsberg. In nearly one course of uninterrupted uniformity, and without any interruptions worthy of being mentioned, did his life flow on. As we have already said, he displayed in it untiring activity of every kind; now and then only, did he make a short trip somewhere; in the majority of cases for the purpose of producing one of his more important works. In consequence of an apoplectic fit which he had at Stettin some years ago, and which gave unmistakable evidence of threatening his bodily and intellectual existence, he was more and more strengthened in his resolution of giving up his professional labors, and so it happened, two years ago, that he left his home, Stettin, to spend the rest of his life—which was rapidly flitting away, and indeed, almost destroyed even then by the apoplectic fit—in Kiel, where there were two married daughters of his. On Tuesday, the 20th of last April, before the conclusion of his seventy-third year, the composer laid his head down in eternal repose.

If, after these few hasty lines, which are intended for nothing more than a short biographical sketch, we cast a glance over the composer's whole life, we may well say that, in what he created, he has left us the best part of his nature. We may truly assert that a long life flowing calmly onward afforded him the very best opportunity of fulfilling most comprehensively his artistico-historic mission, as we would especially designate his composition of ballads. What the simple German song, or *Lied*, owes to the creative spirit of Franz Schubert, in whose productions it is represented to us as a work of art which has attained a perfect degree of harmony, in which form and purport are most intimately combined, and in which the whole variety both of form and purport seems to be exhausted—so much, or nearly as much, does the ballad owe to the imaginative and self-creative efforts of Carl Löwe. Löwe has, for this reason, been called the Schubert of North Germany. In this case also, form and purport appear to have reached the most perfect harmony; words and music, ready to follow the sentiment into the nicest details of individual nature, are enhanced by an artistic representation and characterization of the purport, displaying and unveiling all the riches of mysterious human nature. With no less justice is Löwe called, also, a born ballad composer, on account of the extraordinary number of his works belonging to this class, as well as the uncommon skill and ease with which he could overcome the difficulties presented by the words, bring out prominently the really leading idea of the poetry, and envelop it in a garment resplendent with colors and rich ornaments. For characteristic sharpness, certainty of design, and def-

initeness of drawing; for variety and truth of expression; and for poetic richness of feeling, Löwe, as a ballad composer, stands hitherto unrivaled. For his genuine poetic feeling, which ventured into all countries, at every period of their history, it was an easy task to represent in new and original forms the text, often, as already remarked, difficult to treat, neglecting moreover no opportunity of employing, in piquant touches, a certain style of tone-painting, which he carried out with the minutest details of light and shade. Of this numerous examples might be quoted from every ballad, if it were the object of these lines to illustrate critically, one by one, the catalogue of his works. But since, as a consequence of his efforts to achieve the greatest possible breadth and depth of expression, his treatment of the piano frequently appears overcharged and artificial, and as, too, we have to accept numerous difficulties in the succession of the harmony and numerous archaic forms, as they are called, which at the moment served the composer's purpose, the demands Löwe frequently makes upon the compass and flexibility of the voice, as well as on its powers of endurance, appear by no means inconsiderable, and are probably one of the reasons why—with the exception of some few ballads—scarcely half the treasures he bequeathed us are known to and enjoyed by a very large portion of the public. In two qualities more especially do Löwe's special labors in the domain of ballad composition strike us as being most effective and significant, and likewise crowned with the happiest success: one is that of the romantic coloring of the North, as it is called, where hobgoblins, elves, and witches form the indispensable background, as in the ballads, "Der Erlkönig," "Held Harald," "Der Todtentanz," "Elvershö," "Odins Meeresritt," &c.; and the other the fact of his giving utterance to the folk's tone, in all its intensity, and his pouring forth from his lips those fervent melodies which are capable of at once awaking the most lively echo in the hearts of those who hear them. This is true more especially of the ballads: "Der Wirthin Töchterlein," "Graf Eberhard's Weissdorn," "Fredericus Rex," "Archibald Douglas," "Henrich der Vogler," &c. Notwithstanding this however, the composer possesses a rich scale of tones when his tongue overflows with bitter complaint, profound but passionless sorrow, and patient abnegation. For what is highly dramatic, for the incarnation of passion, as it is called, his power of expression, on the other hand, does not appear equally prompt.

In other departments, also, of his art this composer distinguished himself by great productivity. Though his individuality was not here so free, fresh, and unrestrained as in his ballads, we still find, in the domains of pianoforte music, oratorios, and vocal part compositions, much that is important, original, and as regards form, masterly, from his pen. His least important labors are those in the department of opera. This is to be explained, perhaps, by the fact that Löwe really always held himself aloof from the stage and never sought, by study or otherwise, to become better acquainted with the style of production best adapted for it. However, in consequence of his almost rank luxuriance of fancy, and ease of production, there is scarcely an artistic form, from the symphony down to the simplest waltz, for which he did not, at least, fling a greeting as he passed by. About 140 works of his have been published. Many of them contain, moreover, several numbers. Among them we find sacred and secular part compositions, duets, motets, psalms for male voices, and for mixed chorus; trios, pianoforte compositions, as for instance, the "Zigeuner Sonate," "Frühlingsonate," "Al: enfantaise," "Biblische Bilder," "Sonaten zu 2 und 4 Händen;" the oratorios: *Die Zersetzung Jerusalems*, *Die Sieben Schäfer*, *Gutenberg*, *Johann Huss*, *Festzeiten*, *Die ehrne Schlange*, *Apostel von Philipp*, and *Polus von Atella*; and the opera, *Die Drei Wünsche*. The number too, is large, of his compositions still unpublished: for instance, the opera, *Die Alpenhütte*, *Rudolph der Deutsche Herr*, *Matek Adhel*; choruses and interludes to Raupach's dramatic fantasia, *Das Märchen in Traum*, and to his tragedy of *Themisto*; "Fest Cantaten"; two symphonies, in D and E minor, respectively; and lastly, an admirable Cantata which he composed for the centenary festival of the Lodge of the Three Circles. In consequence of the limited space at our disposal in these columns, we must abandon the idea of pronouncing a critical opinion on the artistic value of all these works; sufficiently large and important is the rich treasure which the composer has bequeathed us in his ballads—and we reckon them among the imperishable portions of artistic wealth—they are the monuments of brass and stone which Löwe raised in the history of art no less than in the hearts of men, and truly reflecting, as they do, the thoroughly original nature of their creator, they will, most certainly, in times far remote, still continue to excite joy, de-

vout sentiments, and emotion in those who hear them. Just as Franz Schubert has become, in a degree attained by no other person, the genuine and unsurpassable *Lieder* singer for the German people, we would call Loewe the unsurpassed ballad-singer of the same people. Resembling in many traits his predecessor, Zumsteeg, in the domain of ballad composition, though incomparably more eloquent, more poetical, and more intellectual, Loewe, like Zumsteeg, has something classical about him, and, above all things, shares with Schubert and other classical masters, that inartificial and undimmed creative ingenuousness, that clear, transparent structure of his creations, that something so well designated as "lightness and freedom from all earthly pressure." Just as with Franz Schubert, it is more especially the romantic element which suits Loewe's nature, and is best adapted to that of his Muse from that element; as from a sanctuary, as from his own especial nature, did his most beautiful and most sublime strains soar upward, through, as a rule, immeasurably more developed towards mysticism than was the case with Schubert. With Loewe as with Schubert too, it is rather the world of inward and profound than great and passionate sentiment, in which their works find the soil wherein to strike root. While, however, with Loewe and the modern *Lieder* composers, the effort to bring out strongly form and purport is manifested particularly in pointed, and frequently self-conscious characterization, in harmonic, rhythmical, and declamatory variety of expression, it is in Schubert's case exhibited principally in an inexhaustible store of melody, nay, more: in an unlimited melodious plastic power, which, like a blessing of tune, that seemed as though it would never end, presented us its blossoms and fruit in almost prodigal magnificence. Notwithstanding this, however, Loewe, also, belongs to those singers to whom the secrets of their art were unclosed without trouble or effort, and displayed in unconstrained melodies. We may say of Loewe, too, that, unconcerned about material advantages, about fame, and about earthly splendor, he sang simply because he felt compelled to sing; because the power of song had been granted him, and because there was a restless desire at work impelling him to manifest to others in tone the rich treasures of his inward sentiments. We must not, however, conceal the fact that his productive faculty could not divest itself of a certain one-sidedness, which, resulting primarily from his being entirely wrapped up in his own subjectively musical existence, unfortunately diverted only too soon his glance from the present, causing him to forget altogether the latter and its musical creations, and rendering him incapable of aught in common with the artists and the art-productions of his own age. It is easy to understand how this loosened the bonds connecting him and his works with the present. While the music of our times falls unfortunately but too often into a certain speculative tendency, while reflection and abstraction threaten to remove us more and more from natural music, properly so-called, we find, in Loewe, a poetic soul, that expresses itself unfettered in music and through music, and the artistic efforts of which were the results of an inward impulse, of an ingenuous, believing enthusiasm, which, conscious of its high aim, seldom incurred the danger of missing that aim.

We began by speaking of a civilizing historical mission which Loewe was destined to fulfil as a ballad composer, and, therefore, we must not conclude without here acknowledging in his works a certain ethical and moral significance. Contrasting with the vapid workings of the current of thought at the present age, a current tainted with the poisonous breath of materialism, and which most of our music serves to reflect, Loewe's music contains a goodly amount of the still fresh vitality of genuine art; his art enables us to obtain an extensive view of the depths and heights of the mind; exercises a purifying and elevating influence upon those who hear it, and frees them, as it were, from the burden weighing down everything belonging to the earth. But, if we are able to ascribe valuable qualities, which in their highest excellence characterize the indescribable worth of classical music, to Loewe's modest muse, we may speak, also, of treasures which the deceased has bequeathed to after-generations, and we fulfil only an imperious duty of pious veneration and of gratitude, in not neglecting to prepare in our hearts, for Loewe's name and works, a place of permanent remembrance, of thankful recognition, and of profound respect.

—*Lond. Mus. World.* DR. EDUARD KRAUSE.

NUREMBERG.—Professor Krause has completed his clay model of the statue to be erected here of Hans Sachs, the Mastersinger. The model has been on view for some time past, and pleases competent judges as well as the great mass of the less critical public.

Dwight's Journal of Music.

BOSTON, SEPT. 25, 1869.

THE NATIONAL MUSICAL CONVENTION, so called, summoned by Mr. TOURJEE, the energetic head of the N. E. Conservatory, and organizer of the Jubilee Chorus, was in session in the Music Hall, all day Wednesday and Thursday of this week. Some permanent organization was adopted; after which papers were read, followed sometimes by discussions, with agreeable interludes of organ-playing and vocal music. We can speak now only of the first day, and of a portion of the exercises. There seemed to be a general vagueness in the plan, few having very precise ideas of why they were assembled or what to do, but rather waiting to see what would be done with them: and much of the talking was vague, and sometimes "hifalutin." But there were good papers also, containing sound and valuable ideas, simply and directly put forth. Among these was the plea for music in the Public Schools, by Mr. D. B. Hagar. The examination and the exercises which followed introduced by Dr. Upham, of children from our schools, from the Primary four and five-year-olds, to the young ladies of the High and Normal Schools, were of real interest, at least to those unfamiliar with our system. Mr. Monroe's paper, also, on "The Physiology of the Voice," with illustrations, must have supplemented them admirably.

But there was one paper which contained so much sound sense and jumped so exactly with our own notions about Organ Playing, going straight to the mark, without superfluous rhetoric or sentimentality, that we have begged the privilege of printing it, and have put other matters aside to make room for the larger half of it, reserving the remainder for our next number.

Organ Playing: Its Uses and Abuses.

A Paper read by J. P. MORGAN, of New York, before the National Musical Convention, Sept. 22, 1869.

I. THE ORGAN IN THE CONCERT ROOM.

These thoughts on organ playing are presented to the Convention in the hope that they may serve to begin a discussion, leading to an effort, which shall be extended throughout the land, to correct the many evils which, you will all agree, prevail in our concert room and churches,—in the former, if only for the sake of Art,—in the latter, for the sake of Art and Religion,—that we may in the practice of our art glorify God, and not insult Him by an abuse of one of His most beautiful gifts.

First we will consider the use of the organ as a *Concert instrument*.

As a result of an increasing interest in music throughout the country, and of the enterprise of organ builders, we have already a few organs of sufficient capacity to be used as concert instruments, exclusively, (chief among them, of course, the magnificent instrument which the country owes to the true musical feeling and enterprise of Boston), and we cannot doubt that before many years we shall see in many of our cities concert halls provided with excellent Organs, containing all the mechanical appliances which inventive talent and industry can devise.

It becomes us, therefore, to inquire: How are we using the means now at our command? Are our efforts as concert players such as will tend to our own improvement as artists? Do those who have mastered the technical difficulties accompanying Organ playing in so far as to be able to select programmes without restriction,—in other words, those who are competent to appear at all as concert players, select programmes so as to attain the most desirable results?

The question now arises of course, what are the highest aims and most desirable results of concert playing?

Let us inquire, first:—Is the mere display of technical skill for the sake of exciting the wonder and admiration of the audience a high aim? Every right-minded artist will answer No!

To most men possessed of great technical skill, the temptation to excite admiration and perhaps wonder by its display is a strong one, especially when there is a prospect of adding to their income by increasing the market value of their services as organists.

That it is always wrong to yield to the temptation in a degree, we do not believe. It is right that skill acquired by patient study and long years of practice, should be admired; but this exhibition of skill should always be a secondary consideration in a performance claiming to have for its object the production of works of art; and we do not hesitate to affirm that, if the artist cannot, during the performance of a composition worthy of an artist's attention, lose sight of this aim, and rise above this desire to make himself the object of admiration and wonder, his performance must become a failure as far as artistic rendering is concerned.

A second inquiry is:—Is affording a pleasant pastime to an audience a high aim in Concert playing?

That it is a good-natured, amiable aim, we will readily admit; that a great artist may find pleasure in helping to afford pleasant recreation now and then even to a Concert audience, is quite conceivable; but that in so doing he is practicing his art in any high sense, or that he can be induced by any consideration less than fear of actual want, to devote his best efforts, or any considerable portion of his efforts to such an end, we firmly believe to be impossible. No artist who has a correct conception of the exalted mission intrusted to him with the talents God has given him, can thus squander His gifts. We speak of artists in general, but we believe this to be particularly applicable to organists, whose calling it is to interpret works of art by means of an instrument capable of expressing the noblest thoughts, with a voice, the majesty of which surpasses that of all instruments invented by man, and which always seems disgraced by being made to utter what is meaningless, frivolous or commonplace. And yet, what do we hear at our popular Organ Concerts? Too often compositions so utterly devoid of connected, sequential thought, so frivolous, so dimly thin, that the soul of an organist who appreciates the powers and understands the voice of his instrument, must sicken if compelled to listen.

We may now properly ask: To what end should an artist's efforts be directed in a Concert performance?

Surely to the production of great compositions in such a manner as to realize their legitimate effect, in other words, reproduce the same emotions and trains of thought in the hearer, which called the work into being, in the mind of the composer, or were chiefly active in his mind when occupied with it. Here we meet with the objection so often urged against the performance of so-called *classical* music, before audiences composed largely of persons not musically educated; viz.: that they do not understand it, and are therefore not interested and entertained by it. Those who object to its performance on this ground say: "Your Fugues and Sonatas may be very interesting to you and to a few musical people, but the great mass of the audience had much rather hear something else." Granted,—but the great mass of the audience are scarcely susceptible of *musical* impression at all, or do not attend a concert for the sake of any intellectual enjoyment or benefit they hope to derive from it, but to be amused, without any effort at thought on their own part.

Is the artist to gratify these people at the expense of his own artistic life and the instruction and legitimate pleasure of the highest and noblest sort which it is in his power to afford the few whose ears and minds are able to receive it?

The habit so universal in this country of regarding a concert room as a place to be *amused*, to pass away time, a place to visit because it is *fashionable* to go to concerts, is to be sure the result in great measure of a lack of cultivation among the people of a comparatively young nation, but has been fostered and encouraged by the persistent course of a great number of merely mercenary performers (we will not call them artists) who have regarded nothing as worthy of pursuit but "Cash."

All the strength to be obtained by united effort and mutual support, which we may hope will result from the present or any future Convention of Musicians, may well be devoted to overcoming this pernicious habit of the American people.

If we are to be respected as artists, we must act as we respected ourselves and our art.

Again, the prejudice, so common, against highly intellectual music is, in a measure, due to the manner in which such music has been produced; and organists have sinned grievously in this regard, by yielding to the temptation to make *effect* pieces of everything. Assuming that the audience cannot understand or enjoy the music as music, the attempt is made to astonish them by a display of technical skill in performing it.

How common it is for a fugue of Bach to be placed upon the programme of an Organ concert, because it is supposed to be difficult to play Bach, and it is due to the reputation of the performer that the people should understand that all this sort of thing is nothing to him,—why, he can play *anything*! But when he begins the Fugue, remarks like the following begin to circulate among the audience: "Well, that may be very difficult, but I don't understand it, and I wish he'd get through," etc., etc. And no wonder; the organist himself does not understand it, or he sins willfully against the composer and against art by perverting a noble work of a great master into an effect piece with which to display his execution to the audience.

This racing through Bach's fugues has done more towards creating a prejudice against them than anything to be found in the fugues themselves.

There is much still remaining to be said upon this branch of the subject, but the limits of this paper will not admit of it.

A favorite idea among organists and people generally, but we believe a very false and injurious one, is that the great office of the Organ, and particularly of a Concert organ is to imitate the orchestra. The consequence of this opinion is that most of our organists devote a great deal of study to what they call orchestral effects; and orchestral Overtures and movements from Symphonies, arranged for the Organ, form, we may say, the chief part of most of our programmes of Organ concerts claiming to consist of compositions of the Masters.

This practice has prevailed to such an extent, that we can see already its injurious effects upon the art of organ building in America. Builders are aiming to produce, not noble toned organs, furnished in every department with the means to meet all the demands of great organ compositions, having a largeness of tone in the diapasons, a brilliancy in the octaves and mixtures, and a gravity resulting from the sixteen-foot manual registers, together with such fullness in numbers, and in power of the pedal registers that the pedal couplers are not required to make amends for a deficiency; organs with a great variety of eight-foot stops carefully voiced so as to afford the contrasting colors of tone necessary for *Trio* playing, in which each of the simultaneously progressing voices may be heard distinctly in all its progressions,—no, they are striving to produce "orchestral organs," as they call them.

We have no space to discuss the question whether the art which has for its highest aim to *imitate* a work of art is worthy of pursuit—we think not,—but when, as in this case, the real character of the artistic means to be employed is ignored in the attempt to *imitate* a means of artistic representation already in common use and brought to great perfection. We maintain that the whole thing is a misdirected effort.

If it were true that the organ is like the orchestra, or capable of producing the effect of an orchestra; if all attempts of organ builders and organ players in this direction were not substantially unsuccessful, we should not so wonder that they are persisted in. The fact is, *the nature of the instrument renders success impossible*.

Undoubtedly the idea that the organ is an orchestra arises from the fact that there are certain points of correspondence, e. g. certain *tone colors* of the orchestra are also found in the organ. Again, we can bring into combination and contrast the different tone colors; lastly, the tones of both can be *sustained*, and a crescendo produced; here the resemblance ceases.

Every orchestral writer knows that the foundation of the orchestra, its very life, is the *string quartet*; that the power of *accent* and *attack*, that power of expression which the bow affords, often consisting in a change in the character of tone after the attack, is an essential feature. This the organ never can reproduce. We hear the tones, but the delivery and inflection, if we may so call it, are wanting. If the same passages were played by the orchestra so as to sound as they do upon the organ, any conductor would pronounce the performance a failure.

Again, the reeds of the organ have neither the effect of the reeds nor of the brass of the orchestra. Here, too, the *attack* and *flexibility after the attack* are wanting. The flute and clarinet of the organ are similar to those of the orchestra only in *tone-color*.

This fundamental difference in the nature of the means points to a difference in the ends to be attained; and if those organists who expend such an amount of time and patient study upon orchestral effects, would devote a part to organ effects and organ music, and the remainder to the study of orchestral composition and orchestra scores, the result would be a better knowledge of the organ, the orchestra, and the best musical literature.

We are glad to acknowledge the skill displayed by talented organists, in these attempts at orchestral imitation, but regret deeply this waste of time and strength uniformly resulting in a *musical failure*, and an act of injustice towards the composer of the orchestral composition; and, the fact is that, while working in this field, these organists neglect almost entirely the rich store of real organ music, both ancient and modern, now accessible to all:—music which can find adequate expression only by a proper use of the resources peculiar to the organ.

ERNST PERABO. after a year's rest from concert playing, proposes to enter the field again this winter, and will be welcomed with much joy. He intends to give two series of chamber concerts. One, a series of four, beginning October 29, in which he will play number of the rarely heard Sonatas of Beethoven's latest period; besides some fine arrangements, by Henselt and Pauer, of several Beethoven Overtures; and the "Kreutzer" Sonata with Mr. Listemann. Nor will Bach and Handel be forgotten.

The other series, beginning Jan. 7, will be Historical, the brothers Listemann bearing part in them. The concerts will be eight in number,—once a fortnight.

Our notice of the HUMBOLDT FESTIVAL is unavoidably left over.

Bach's Passion Music.—A Word to the Chorus.

MR. EDITOR:—It marks a step in the musical progress of our city, when its oldest Choral Society, dependent as it is upon the favor with which its performances are received by the public for its financial prosperity, dares to undertake the production of a work like the *Passion Music* of Bach. Especially is it gratifying, at a time when Boston has gained for itself such questionable fame in the eyes of the musical world, that it should have an opportunity of showing that the word *great*, in its vocabulary, is not a mere synonyme for *big*. But the thought immedi-

ately occurs, will such a difficult work prove a success from a musical point of view? And this brings me to my point.

It is well known that a small minority of a chorus, by negligence and absence at rehearsals, may render nugatory all the practice and care of the majority; and it is no secret that this minority is largely responsible for the more obvious inaccuracies in the choral singing of the Handel and Haydn Society. The officers of the Society, about two years ago, adopted a custom of checking the attendance of members at rehearsals. Its results have been good, noticeably in the Triennial Festival in the spring of 1868; but as no penalty was affixed to a continued absence, the difficulty before spoken of, of unpractised singers coming in at the last moment, was not entirely met. I would suggest, therefore, that if a rule should be made that only those who were present at some fixed proportion (say one-half) of the rehearsals for any given performance, should be admitted to the chorus on that occasion, the result would be seen in a great improvement in the accuracy, power and unity of the singing, and, in the particular case of the *Passion Music*, might make the difference between success and failure.

I would make this suggestion through the columns of your paper because, although it must ultimately be addressed to the officers of the Society, it is a matter which concerns the whole musical public, and more immediately the chorus itself, which, I doubt not, would uphold its popular Directors in any action they might take to insure a more successful consummation of its labors.

C.

Music Abroad.

NORWICH FESTIVAL.—The fifteenth of the triennial festivals began on Monday, Aug. 30.

As for the artistic staff, this numbered among the principals Miles, Tietjens and Ilma de Murska; Mmes. Talbot Cherer, Patey, and Trebelli-Bettini; Messrs. Vernon Rigby, A. Byron, W. H. Cummings, Santley, Signori Bettini and Foli. The orchestral and choral force was sufficiently strong for the realization of the effects of combination in the several important works included in the programme. The band consisted of nearly eighty performers, most of them being members of the opera establishments; and Messrs. Henry and Richard Blagrove, Lazarus, Harper, Watson, Hutchins and Anderson having the leading posts assigned them.

The chorus was in good proportion to the instrumental force; consisting of 279 voices, divided into 72 sopranos, 35 contraltos, 28 altos, 67 tenors, and 77 basses. The nucleus of this body of vocalists was contributed by the excellent Norwich Choral Society, with some few additions from the Cathedral choir, and from other provincial sources, but few choristers being required from London. Over these constituents, Mr. Benedict, as conductor, presided.

The *Musical World's* reporter, writing at the end of the first day, says :

At 10 o'clock this morning, band, chorus and principals assembled for rehearsal, which, with the exception of a short interval for luncheon, lasted till nearly 5 o'clock. Mendelssohn's *Lohesang*, Handel's *Acis and Galatea* (both to be performed this evening), the selection from Mr. Pierson's *Hezekiah* (parts of which Mr. Benedict caused to be repeated three or four times), the whole of Rossini's Mass and the new "Song of Praise," conducted by the composer, Mr. Horace Hill, Mus. Bac., Cantab., son of the late and brother of the present chorus-master, were all gone through during this long and trying day, which is to close with a concert of certainly more than three hours' duration. Thus for nearly ten hours will the walls of St. Andrew's Hall have resounded to the "concourse of sweet sounds."

The report is continued thus on Tuesday.

The greater part of to-day has been again given to rehearsals. Handel's *Dettingen Te Deum*, portions of *Hezekiah* (once more), and a variety of pieces for the evening performance have sadly taxed the energies of those members of the band whose familiarity with many of the works would have rendered repetition altogether unnecessary, but who are compelled to go through the infliction for the benefit of the amateur or incompetent element of which I have already spoken.

The performance of last evening was successful, in both an artistic and financial point of view. True there might have been an improvement in the lady to whom was confided the soprano music, in *Acis* and *Galatea*, and whose engagement forso important

a post as that of *seconda donna* can hardly be explained except by reference to that source of so many mistakes—local influence; but if the representative of the love-stricken nymph fell short of perfection, the amorous swain, the gentle shepherd, and the revengeful giant of the most charming pastoral ever written, found in Messrs. Vernon Rigby, Cummings, and Santley representatives of the highest capability, while the chorus (which is particularly noticeable for the beauty of the soprano and bass voices) did full justice to the ever fresh and tuneful music of Handel. Mendelssohn's *Hymn of Praise* (which, in proper order, should have been mentioned first, inasmuch as after the National Anthem it opened the concert), was admirably sung and played throughout. Mlle. Tietjens sustaining the soprano, and Mr. Cummings, the tenor part; "Praise thou the Lord," by the former, and the famous "Watchman" solo by the latter, producing a marked effect.

Then came one of those miscellaneous evening concerts in which the John Bull appetite has not a rival. Twenty-three pieces on the programme,—to which add four encores! We cite the curiosity in full:

Reformation Symphony.....	Mendelssohn.
Prayer, "Ruler of this awful hour," (Oberon), Mr. W. H. Cummings.....	C. M. v. Weber.
Cavatina, "Lasca ch'lo piango?" (Rinaldo), Mme. Paetz.....	Handel.
Aria, "Salve dimora" (Faust) Mr. Vernon Rigby. Violin obbligato, Mr. H. Blagrove.....	Gounod.
Quartet, "Il cor e la mia fe" (Fidelio), Mlle. Tietjens, Mme. Talbot-Cherer, Mr. W. H. Cummings, and Signor Foli.....	Beethoven.
Aria, "Nacqui all'affanno," "Non più mesta" (Cenerentola), Mme. Trebelli-Bettini.....	Rossini.
Romanza, "Deserto in terra" (Don Sebastian), Signor Bettini.....	Donizetti.
Gran Scena ed Aria (Medea), Mlle. Tietjens (first time of performance in England). Conducted by the Composer.....	Randegger.
Song, "The Wreck of the Hesperus," Mr. Santley.....	J. L. Hatton.
Melodie for four Violoncellos and Contrabasso ("Sonne-nir de Curis"), Messrs. Paque, Chipp, Guest, Pettie, and Howell.....	Paque.
Aria, "The Shadow Song" (Dinorah), Mlle. Tietjens.....	Meyerbeer.
Quartet, "Over the dark blue waters" (Oberon), Mlle. Tietjens, Mme. Trebelli-Bettini, Signor Bettini, and Mr. Santley.....	Mr. C. M. v. Weber.
Overture, (Fernand Cortez).....	Spontini.
Air, "Rage, thou angry Storm" (The Gipsy's Warning), Signor Foli.....	Benedict.
Duet, "Now let every sorrow vanish" (Der Borgeiste), Mlle. Tietjens and Mr. Santley.....	Soprano.
Duo, "Dis-moi ce mot" ("One Word"), Mme. Trebelli-Bettini and Signor Bettini.....	Nicolai.
Air, "Yes, let me like a Soldier fall," (Maritana), Mme. Vernon Rigby.....	Wallace.
Song, "Water parted from the Sea" (Artaxerxes), Mme. Talbot-Cherer.....	Arne.
National Chorus, "Ye Mariners of England," By the Choir.....	H. Hugo Pierson.
Song, "The last Rose of Summer," Mlle. Tietjens, Song, "Draw the Sword, Scotland," Mr. W. H. Cummings.....	Scotch.
Romance, "Comme à vingt ans," Mme. Trebelli-Bettini.....	Durand.
Grand March [Tannhäuser].....	Richard Wagner.

The "Reformation Symphony" fell dead, it seems, in spite of a fine rendering. Of Sig. Randegger's composition the reporter says:

The *scena* is divided into four movements—a *recitative, andante*, a second recitative, and an *allegro*. Written originally for Mme. Ruderstorff, and produced last winter at the Leipzig "Gewandhaus" with great success, it commanded the warm admiration of the German public in general, and the praise of a less competent judge than Ferdinand Hiller in particular. Signor Randegger might feel quite secure of his position in submitting his work to the test of an English audience, more especially as Mlle. Tietjens, whose embodiment of Medea (Cherubini's) is one of the grandest efforts ever witnessed in the lyric drama, was to be the exponent. All the wonderful fire and energy, the grand declamation, the thorough earnestness, and evident desire to do the fullest justice to the composer were exhibited by the great *prima donna*, and in saying that the composition and the singer were alike worthy of each other, a fitting tribute is paid to both.

Wednesday Morning was occupied with a selection from Mr. H. Hugo Pierson's new Oratorio, "Hezekiah, King of Judah."

The oratorio begins with Hezekiah's announcement of his purpose to purify the Temple and re-establish the exercise of true religion. He summons the priests and Levites to resume their ministrations. He celebrates a memorable Passover, which is kept with extraordinary demonstrations of joy.

Part II is chiefly occupied with Hezekiah's illness and recovery, which (as most commentators now agree) must have preceded the Assyrian invasion,

although placed after it in the Scripture narrative. No movement from this part of the oratorio is included in the present selection.

Part III. contains the most highly dramatic, and spirit-stirring scenes in the work. Hezekiah addresses his officers and troops in a tone of calm and dauntless confidence in God's protection. He receives a haughty missive from Sennacherib, proceeds to the Temple, spreads the letter before the Lord, and pleads long and anxiously for deliverance.

A Divine message is sent in reply by Isaiah, assuring him, not merely of final victory, but that the heathen invader shall not even be permitted to attack the sacred city. The catastrophe follows, but here the author has found himself compelled to make use of secular resources, since the account of the destruction of Sennacherib's army, as given in Scripture, is scarcely capable of being rendered musically. With a triumphant chorus the oratorio concludes. Parts of the prophecies of Isaiah uttered during the progress of the invasion, as well as passages from Psalms 46, 75, and 76, which are known to have been written with direct reference to it (possibly by Hezekiah himself), are embodied in Part III.

The hall was about half filled, and the applause which found vent from time to time seemed to be led rather by the partisans of Mr. Pierson, than dictated by the spontaneous feeling of the general public. True, this is no criterion; for people who could sit unmoved through Mendelssohn's *Lobgesang*, can hardly be accepted as competent judges of such a work as that produced this morning. The most genuine expression of approval was drawn forth by the air with chorus, "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem," a compliment quite as much due to the exquisite singing of Mlle. Tietjens, as to the merit of the piece. The greatest possible pains to ensure a perfect performance was taken by Mr. Benedict (whose labors this week are most trying), while Mlle. Tietjens and Messrs. Cummings and Santley all exerted themselves to the utmost in the various solos allotted to them. From the "argument" it will be seen that the selection is very unconnected, and with mere disjointed fragments of a word, which, if heard at all, should be heard in its entirety, it may, perhaps, be thought hardly fair to pronounce a definite judgment. Still, I am bound to record the fact that the opinion of all those with whom I have had an opportunity of communicating, quite agrees with my own,—that the oratorio has achieved, at the best, but a local *succès d'estime*, and that beyond Norfolk and Norwich Mr. Pierson's fame is not likely to extend.

We add the *Orchestra's* opinion:

As far as the music could be judged Mr. Pierson's inspiration reaches respectable mediocrity; but a final judgment cannot fairly be recorded in respect of a work of which only a small portion was given. Certainly there is nothing in the Selection to warrant the high position claimed for this gentleman by his friends: indeed we should hardly think that "Hezekiah" can equal the previous "Jerusalem." Mr. Pierson doubtless possesses great technical knowledge, and the hearer is not offended by the crudities which have found place in some modern attempts at oratorio; but the master-mind is wanting which should produce an enduring work of this kind.

Soprano's "Fall of Babylon" completed the morning's programme. The evening concert again offered 23 pieces,—although it was shorter than that of Monday. Part I. was wholly devoted to excerpts from Mozart, two of which were instrumental and rather novel: viz: the Overture to *Der Schauspiel Director*, and a Serenade for two principal violins, viola and contrabass, accompanied by violins, violas, 'cellos and timpani, composed at Salzburg in 1776; the unpublished autograph manuscript (No. 239 in Von Koechel's Catalogue) is owned by Sig. Randegger. Part II. gave Songs, &c., by Virginia Gabriel, F. David, Randegger, Meyerbeer, Bevignani, Boyce ("Hearts of Oak," Santley), Handel, and Arthur Sullivan, preceded by the Overture to *Frey-schütz*, and followed by that to *Zembla*.

The selections for Thursday were a Sacred Cantata by Mr. Horace Hill, and Rossini's *Messe Solemnelle*; and for the last day, the *Messiah*. Of these next time, when we shall also have reports of the Worcester Festival, which was to follow.

PRAGUE.—Herr Carl Loewe's oratorio of *Johannes Huss* to be executed at the festival in honor of the great Bohemian reformer and martyr. Singers from every vocal association in Bohemia will take part in the performance.

Special Notices.

DESCRIPTIVE LIST OF THE

LATEST MUSIC,

Published by Oliver Ditson & Co.

Vocal, with Piano Accompaniment.

My darling Sadie. 3. D to e. G. A. Veazie. 35

A sweet ballad in popular style, which has the peculiarity of a chorus longer than the solo part, ingeniously arranged, and which would be itself make a good quartet.

Wake us at Dawn, Mother! 3. D to e. Nish. 35

A very taking description of the sunny hours of childhood, when the whole earth seemed "a beautiful garden of flowers," and the day was not half long enough for the play-times, which left off too soon. Very good melody, and a nice chorus.

The Daisy Valley.

Nish. 35

Ba, Be, Bi, Bo, Bu.

" 30

Two pretty songs of different characters, the "Daisy" song being a pleasing ballad, and Ba, Be, Bi, Bo, Bu, a comic song of that innocent kind that takes so well among children. "No school should be without it," as the numerous mis-spellings amuse the juveniles hugely, while all will be ready to join in "Ba, Be, Bi, Bo, Bu," at the end of each verse.

Listening on the hill. Smart. 30

Peasing ballad by a good composer.

Instrumental.

Mendelssohn's Celebrated Songs, Transcribed for for Piano by Osborne In 4 books. each 60

Book 1.—May Song. (Mayenlied).

Retrospection. (Romance).

Welcome to Spring. (Im Grünen).

Sontagslied.

Book 2.—In Autumn. (Im Herbst).

Pilgrim's Song. (Pilgerspruch).

Spring Song. (Frühlinglied).

Husband's Song. (Reislied).

Book 3.—Spring Advancing. (Frühlingsglaube).

Winter Song. (Winterlied).

Old Love Song. (Minnelied).

Verlust.

Book 4.—Ferne.

Resignation. (Entsagung).

The Nun. (Die Nonne).

Joy of Spring. (Frühlingslied).

Mendelssohn's compositions are yet too recent to have gone through all the transformations which have brought out the many-sided beauties of airs of older composers. So we have, probably for the first time, an extended list of his songs, arranged for the piano alone. They are graceful and pleasing, well arranged, and proper companions for the well-known "Songs without Words."

Sunny Side Waltz. 3. Bb. Fernald. 35

Not only sunny-sided, but sunny all around. A light and cheerful waltz.

Florence Schottisch. 3. C. Lemon. 35

Of striking beauty. Will be a decided favorite.

Pot-pourri. "Fra Diavolo." 4. Wels. 75

Fra Diavolo is a fine opera to be thus arranged. Try it.

Overture to Pique Dame. 4 hds. 4. F. von Suppe. 1.00

A bright and rattling thing, which is, in addition, quite novel.

Evening Calm. Melody. 4. Eb. E. M. Lott. 30

A very graceful and soothing piece, very satisfying while it lasts, and is not long enough to weary.

Constantia Galop. 2. C. Ucho. 30

A nice little instructive piece, just right for a beginner.

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ABBREVIATIONS.—Degrees of difficulty are marked from 1 to 7. The key is marked with a capital letter, as C, B flat, &c. A small Roman letter marks the highest note, if on the staff, an italic letter the highest note, if above the staff.

